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Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Headquarters Building: study report

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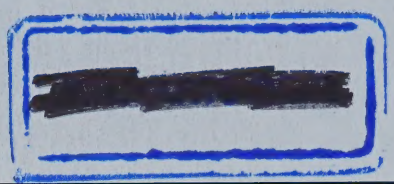

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Headquarters Building

Study Report

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Boston Landmarks Commission
Environment Department
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of

The Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters
20 Somerset Street, Boston

as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by: _____
Ellen J. Lipsey, Executive Director Date

Approved by: _____
Thomas Herman, Vice-Chairman Date

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1.0 LOCATION OF PROPERTY

1.1 Address:

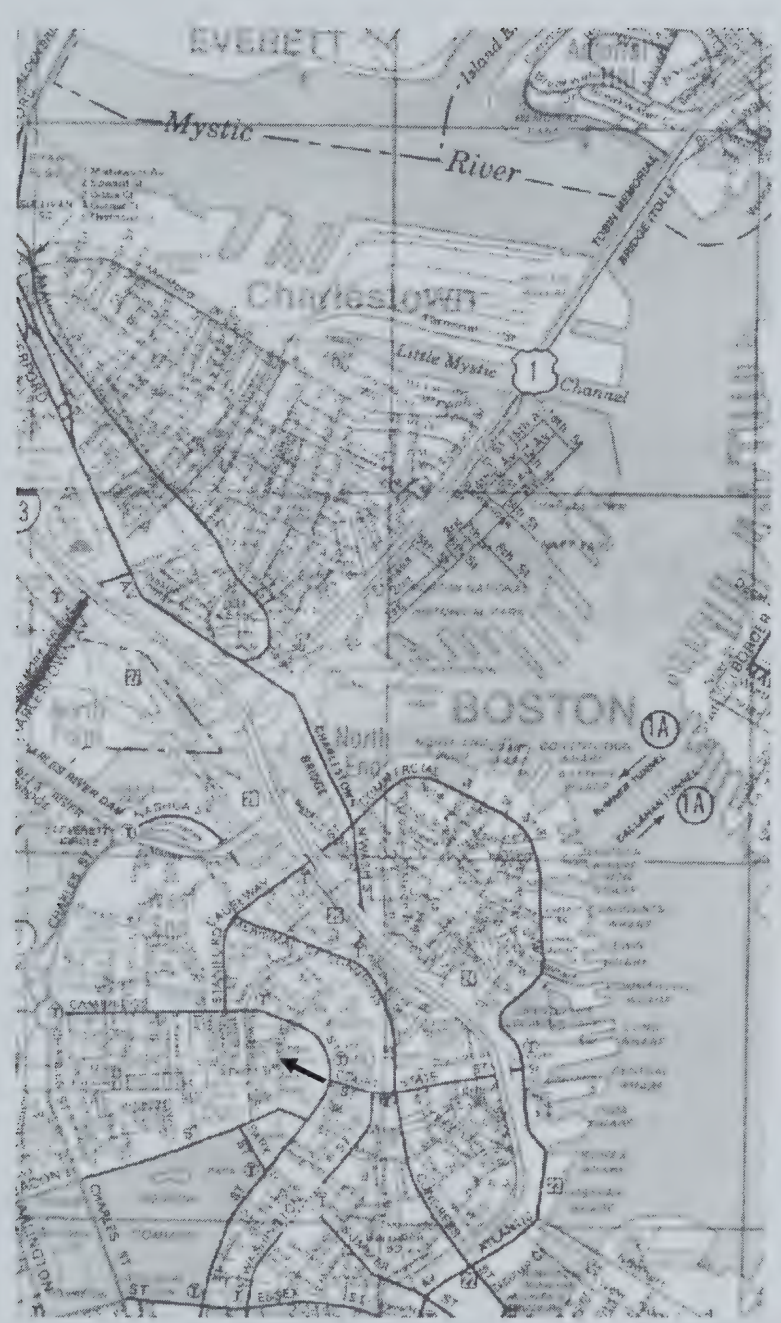
20 Somerset Street, Boston, MA

Assessor's parcel number:
Ward 3, Parcel 0302782000

1.2 Area in which property is Located:

The Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters building at 20 Somerset Street is located on the west side of Somerset Street just north of the northwest corner of Ashburton Place and Somerset Street. Topographically, Somerset Street is located on the north slope of Beacon Hill, however the street lies outside the boundaries of the Beacon Hill Historic District.

1.3 Map Showing Location



Map illustrating location of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Headquarters building (marked with an arrow) within the context of Boston.

Assessor's map illustrating parcel #0302782000 within the immediate neighborhood.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Headquarters building at 20 Somerset Street was constructed in 1930 to serve as the first centralized, purpose-built base of operations for the MDC. As directed in Chapter 362 of the Acts of 1929, the legislation that provided for the construction of a General Office and Headquarters Building for the MDC, the nine story building was primarily occupied by the divisions of the MDC with additional space leased to other state agencies. The building was the headquarters of the MDC for seventy-four years. In April of 2004, following the legislative merger of the MDC and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to form the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the MDC staff were relocated to office space at 251 Causeway Street, formerly the primary office of DEM. Later in 2004, DCR transferred the MDC Headquarters building to the Division of Capital Assets Management (DCAM) to surplus the building. DCAM awarded development of the building site to Weston Associates, Inc., in June 2005. The development proposal calls for demolition of the MDC Headquarters building for construction of a residence hall and student center for Suffolk University.

2.2 Physical Description

The MDC Headquarters building stands as the lone survivor of the urban renewal campaign that leveled the area bound by Cambridge, Bowdoin, Ashburton, and Somerset streets as part of the Government Center construction project of the 1960s. With the substantial takings and subsequent wholesale demolition of the buildings and street pattern that comprised this area in anticipation of the construction of the Leverett Saltanstall State Office Building in 1966 and the John W. McCormack State Office Building in 1975, the vast majority of the historic context of Somerset Street was destroyed. Evidence of the former context remains, however, in the exterior expression of the MDC Headquarters building.

The MDC Headquarters building has two primary facades, the eastern façade fronting Somerset Street, and the northern façade facing the adjacent Garden of Peace. Prior to the Government Center takings of the 1960s, the MDC Headquarters building stood at the southwest corner of Somerset and Allston streets. Allston Street connected Somerset and Bowdoin streets, running east to west. The high level of ornamentation and detail of the northern elevation, which fronted Allston Street, as compared with the southern elevation which served as a party wall reflects that former street pattern. The southern elevation, which is largely devoid of architectural detail, reflects the former proximity of the nineteenth century buildings between the MDC Headquarters building and Ashburton Place.

The architectural detailing of the primary facades of the MDC Headquarters building represents a final insight into the historic context in which this building was constructed. The red brick, granite trimmed, Colonial Revival detailing was congruent with the architectural expression of its surroundings. While the area in which the MDC Headquarters building was constructed had developed during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century as a residential neighborhood, beginning in the 1880s and continuing through the 1930s, institutional and publicly-oriented buildings replaced parts of the older residential development. During this transitional phase of development, the newly constructed buildings departed from the residential buildings in scale and detailing, though they retained the traditional building materials of the neighborhood. Tall, red brick, Colonial Revival buildings proliferated, among them the MDC Headquarters building. Remnants of this context survive outside the boundaries of the takings for the Government Center project at 12-14 Somerset Street constructed in 1913 as the Boston City Club, and at 122-126 Bowdoin Street, constructed in 1927 as the Beacon Hill House.

The MDC Headquarters building presents five bays to Somerset Street, extends six bays deep, rises nine stories and is capped with a flat roof surmounted by a penthouse, which was originally the base of a radio tower that served the MDC police. The Somerset Street (eastern) elevation terminates in a granite trimmed pediment. The steel and concrete frame structure of the building is clad primarily with red brick, with the upper stories of the primary (eastern and northern) elevations resting on a rusticated granite base. Granite belt courses delineate the third and eighth stories on these elevations. The granite base is pierced by three arched openings on the eastern elevation and four arched openings on the northern elevation. These openings feature Gibbsean surrounds. Rectangular window openings pierce in the end bays of the granite base of the eastern and northern elevations.

Primary entry into the building is through the central opening on the eastern elevation, which features etched bronze double doors with plate glass framed by Greek pilasters and an entablature executed in copper, and is surmounted by a leaded glass fan light with bronze detailing including an eagle resting on a crest. A granite plaque carved with the name of the building's primary tenant, the Metropolitan District Commission, appears above the entry.

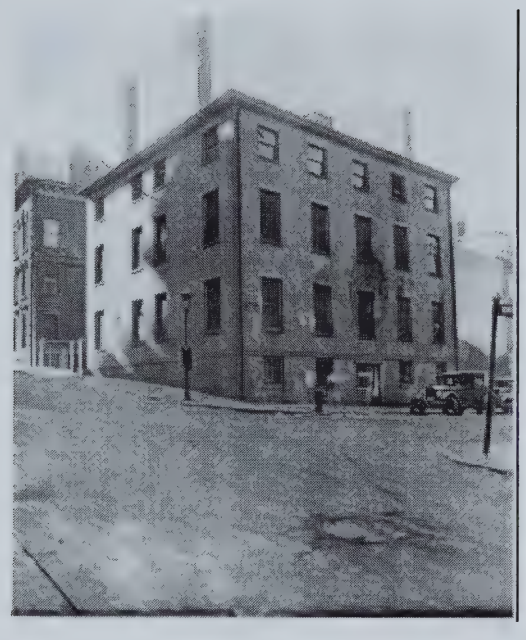
The fenestration pattern of the eastern elevation, which is repeated on the northern elevation is dictated by the division of the bays, which are articulated on the upper stories by brick pilasters. The second story openings are larger and more elaborate in their treatment than in the stories above. These apertures are trimmed with granite and rest on large granite sills. The middle bays of the upper stories feature paired window openings with granite lintels and sills, while the end bays are pierced by individual windows. The windows in the end bays at the seventh story levels on both the eastern and northern elevations are capped with small,

granite pediments. All fenestration consists of metal casement sash with cast iron mullions.

As a secondary elevation originally obscured by adjacent buildings, the southern facade of the MDC headquarters is utilitarian in appearance and does not express the pronounced organization of the primary facades. This façade exposes the footprint of the building which steps in one bay about half way back from Somerset Street. The recessed central portion divides this elevation into three bays. The eastern most bay presents a blank wall enlivened by decorative brickwork in the shape of a large rectangle beginning at the third story level. The central recessed bay is lit by two rows of double hung windows embellished only by granite sills. The western most bay is lit by four rows of windows; the eastern most row lights the stairwell at half story levels, paired windows light the westernmost portion, and single windows light the central portion of the bay. This fenestration also features granite sills.

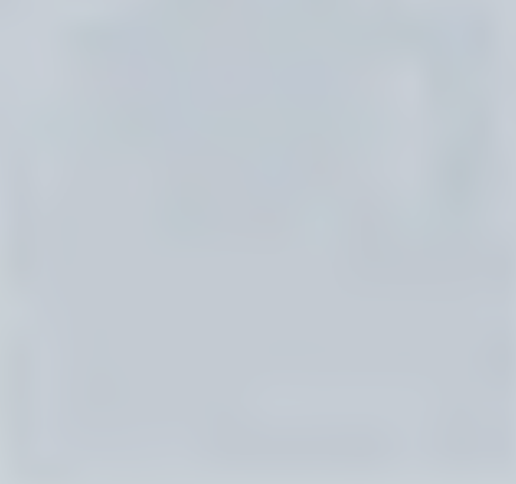
The western elevation of the MDC Headquarters building, though the rear of the building, was not a party wall, thus it resembles the eastern and northern elevations in treatment more than it does the southern elevation. It too sits on a rusticated granite base and features decorative granite trim and beltcourses carried around from the northern elevation. The distinguishing feature of this façade is that it is composed of seven slim bays defined by single windows.

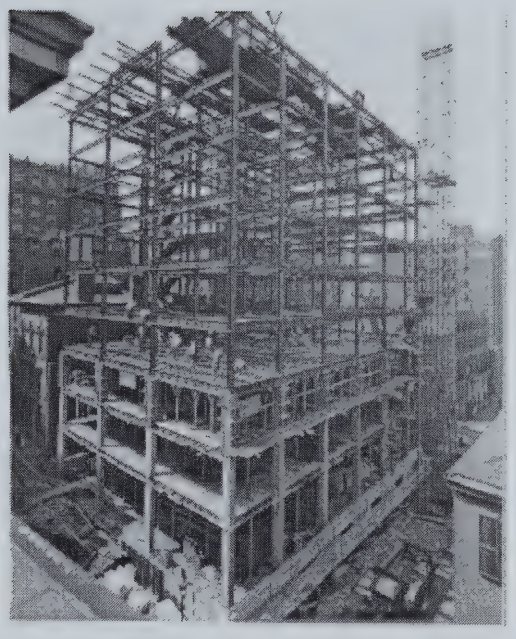
2.3 Photographs



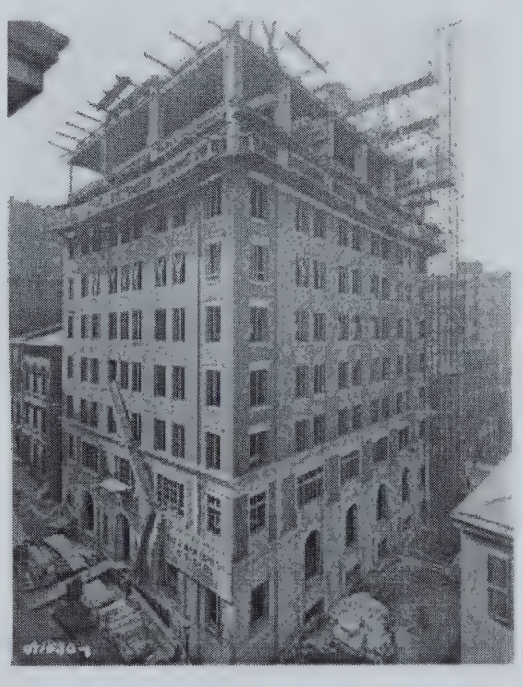
The Somerset Street School at the southwest corner of Somerset and Allston streets was one of two buildings demolished for the MDC Headquarters. Photo taken ca. 1929. (Courtesy of DCR archives)

A row house on Allston Street adjacent to the school yard of the Somerset Street School was the second building taken for the site of the MDC Headquarters. Photo taken ca. 1929. (Courtesy of DCR archives)





Steel frame of the MDC Headquarters building during construction, August 1930. (Courtesy of DCR archives)



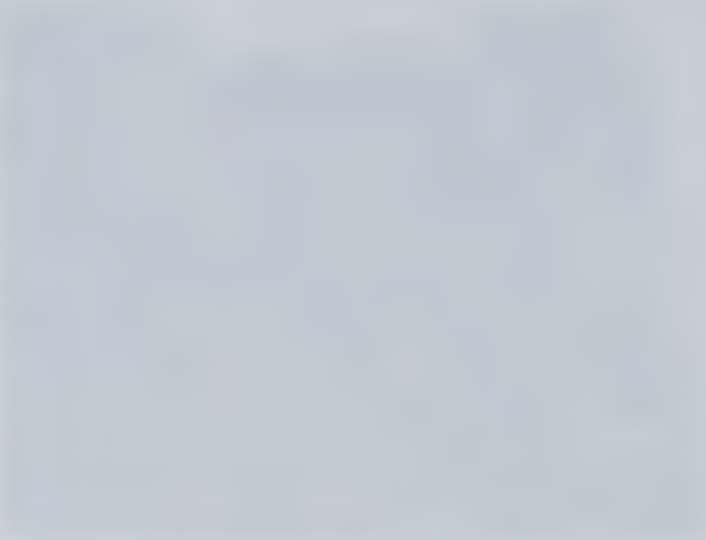
Cladding of the façade of the MDC headquarters building during construction, September 1930. (Courtesy of DCR archives)

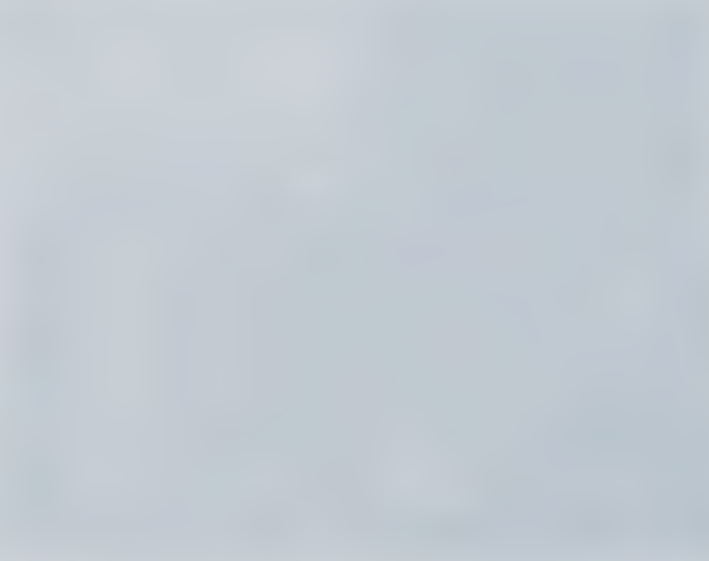
Completed MDC Headquarters building, December 1930. (Courtesy of DCR archives)

MDC Headquarters building ca. 1960. (Courtesy of DCR archives)

North elevation of the MDC Headquarters building. (BLC photo 2006)

South elevation of the MDC Headquarters building. (BLC photo 2006)

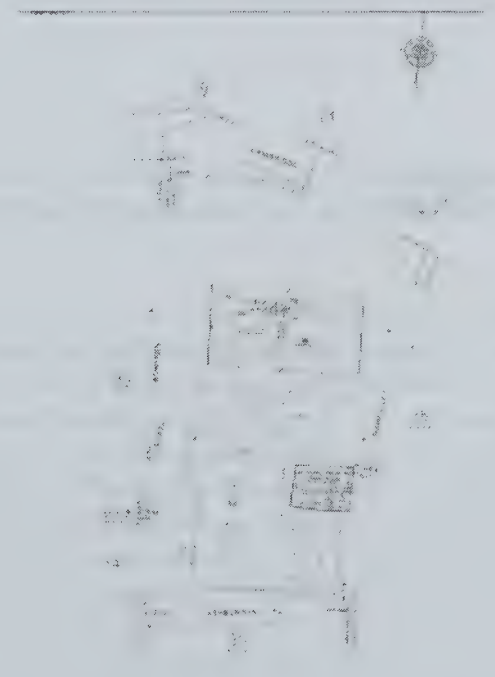




East and north elevations of the MDC headquarters building. (BLC photo 2005)

West (rear) elevation of the MDC headquarters building from Roemer Plaza . (BLC photo 2005)

1938 Bromley Atlas illustrating the former street pattern around the MDC Headquarters building.



1978 Sanborn map illustrating the extent of the demolition for the state office buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. The MDC Headquarters building is the lone survivor of that urban renewal campaign.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the MDC Headquarters building lies primarily with its main tenant, the Metropolitan District Commission, for whom it was purpose-built in 1930. The MDC, established in 1919, represented the merger of what were originally three of the country's pioneering regional agencies: the Metropolitan Sewerage Board, the Metropolitan Water Board, and the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC). Individually these agencies were among the first in the nation to implement regional management of shared resources, and served as national and international models for regional planning. The merger in 1919 created a single regional agency charged with the oversight of watersheds, water supply and treatment facilities, sewerage and sewerage treatment plants, as well as parklands and parkways for all of the cities and towns within a ten mile radius of downtown Boston. The work initiated by the individual agencies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and advanced by the MDC after 1919 transformed in the development of Metropolitan Boston. The MDC Headquarters building was the first purpose-built centralized home of the MDC, designed not only to serve as an office building for this significant agency, but also to safeguard the planning documents that created the Metropolitan District as we know it today. Additional significance is achieved for the building's association with its designers, the architectural firm of Densmore, LeClear, and Robbins, a prominent Boston-based architectural firm whose work is represented throughout the Commonwealth.

3.1 Historic Significance

Developing of a Regional Approach to Planning: The Metropolitan Sewerage Board, the Metropolitan Park Commission, and the Metropolitan Water Board

The concept of a regional approach to authority over issues of common concern among cities and towns was first implemented in this country by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the form of the Metropolitan Sewerage Board in 1889, the first state-founded regional agency in the United States.[1] The establishment of the Metropolitan Sewerage Board came in response to the public health hazard created by the discharge of waste into public waters that plagued metropolitan Boston during the late nineteenth century. As the waters coursed through multiple cities and towns, the remedy to the problems created by the pollution depended on a unified response. A report published by the state legislature in 1886, in which the Board of Health played a prominent role, presented the results of a study of the possibilities of a general system of drainage for the Mystic, Charles, and Blackstone River Valleys. The report recommended the construction of two main sewers to be operated by "a central agency and

[1] Green Ribbon Commission, "Enhancing the future of the Metropolitan Park System, Final Report and Recommendations of the Green Ribbon Commission." May 1996, pg. 14.

authority which can for this special purpose override town boundaries and disregard local susceptibilities." The report argued that a central agency would be crucial to the success of the sewer projects as, they "are neither of them of local or municipal character. They partake, on the contrary, preeminently of the nature of great arterial channels for the benefit of wide metropolitan districts."[2] A second report in 1889 by the Board of Health became the basis for the enabling legislation of Metropolitan Sewerage Board enacted in 1889 which directed the Board to "construct, maintain, and operate…such main sewers and other works as shall be required for a system of sewage disposal," for eight cities and towns.[3]

The concept of a regional authority first established with the Metropolitan Sewerage Board spawned the other two agencies that would merge with the Metropolitan Sewerage Board to form the MDC. Just four years after the establishment of the Metropolitan Sewerage Board, the State Legislature created the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC) in 1893 to oversee the creation of a Metropolitan Park System. It would be the first regional park system in the United States.[4] The legislation granted the five member commission the powers of eminent domain, set up a Metropolitan Parks Trust Fund, and specified twelve cities and twenty-four towns that would comprise the Metropolitan Park District.

In the years leading up to the legislation that created the MPC, the case for a metropolitan system of parks was made primarily by landscape architect, Charles Eliot, and journalist, Sylvester Baxter. Also responding to the rapid development occurring during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and its impacts on natural resources, Eliot and Baxter's arguments echoed those made by the Board of Health in favor of a central agency for overseeing a unified system of response to the sewerage issues of a few years earlier. In remarks on behalf of the Trustees of Public Reservations, an organization founded by Eliot and Baxter in 1891 to protect Metropolitan Boston's natural landscape, Eliot asserted the impending threat to natural resources in the era of industrialization:

> Here is a rapidly growing metropolis planted by the sea, and yet possessed of no portion of the sea-front…Here is a city interwoven with tidal marshes and controlling none of them; so that the way is open for the construction upon them of cheap buildings for the housing of the lowest poor and the nastiest trades. Here is a district possessed of a charming river already much resorted to for pleasure, the banks of which are continually in danger of spoliation at the hands of private owners. Here is a community which must have pure drinking water, which yet up to this time has failed to secure even one water basin from danger of pollution…Is it not evident that present methods are too slow and

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[2] Water Supply System Thematic National Register Nomination, Section 8, pg. 5.
[3] Chapter 439 of the Acts of 1889.
[4] Norman T. Newton. "Charles Eliot and his Metropolitan Park System," Design on the Land. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University) 1971, pg. 323.

> inefficient? Can this community afford to go slowly? Is not some form of joint or concerted action advisable at once?[5]

Further echoing the report that established the Metropolitan Sewerage Board, in a letter to Governor Russell in 1891, Eliot wrote of the need for a central governing agency to address the inefficiencies of the limited local efforts at preserving the landscape. He concluded, "There seems to be no remedy for this state of things except the establishment of some central and impartial body capable of disregarding municipal boundaries and all local considerations, and empowered to create a system of public reservations for the benefit of the metropolitan district as a whole."[6]

The creation of the MPC in 1893 initiated an unprecedented era of park development and regional planning in metropolitan Boston that would become a national and an international model. The establishment of the system required acquiring land within an area identified as the Boston basin, a geographical region roughly defined by the present day Route 95/128 corridor. This included the Blue Hills, south of Boston, Bear and Prospect hills in Waltham, the Middlesex Fells in Winchester, Medford, Melrose, and Malden, Lynn Woods in Lynn, watersheds which drained the areas of the Middlesex, Charles and Neponset rivers, and beach front areas in Nahant, Revere, Quincy, and Hull. By 1900, the MPC had amassed over 9,000 acres, formed 11 reservations, and created 17 miles of parkways.[7] The park system that evolved over the next century was comprised of beaches, wooded reservations, landscaped parks, parkways, and eventually grew to include swimming pools, recreational fields, and playgrounds. Bandstands, bathhouses, shelters, and refectories increased the public draw to these settings. The resultant park system has been identified as, "the most notable scheme of comprehensive metropolitan park planning in the United States."[8]

The third and last of the independent regional agencies that would become folded into the MDC was the Metropolitan Water Board. Following the pioneering models of the Metropolitan Sewerage Board and the Metropolitan Park Commission, the state legislature established the Metropolitan Water Board in 1895, "to construct, maintain, and operate a system of metropolitan water works..." for seven cities and six towns in the Boston metropolitan area.[9] The report issued by the Board of Health that formed the basis for this legislation specifically stated that it was guided by justifications it had developed in support of a metropolitan sewerage system.[10] The mission of the Metropolitan Water Board was to provide pure water to the metropolitan Boston area. This involved

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[5] As quoted in Newton, pg. 324.
[6] As quoted in Newton, pg. 324.
[7] Division of Capital Asset Management. Draft Speedway Headquarters Historic Structures Report, 2-3-05, pg.7-8.
[8] John C. Teaford, *The Unheralded Triumph:City Government in America, 1870-1900*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) 1984, pg. 256-257.
[9] Water Supply System Thematic Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Section 8, pg. 7.
[10] Ibid, Section 8, pg. 6.

construction of aqueducts that would transmit water from outlying water sources into reservoirs for distribution among the cities and towns of metropolitan Boston. Following the precedents set by the Metropolitan Sewerage Board and the Metropolitan Park System, the Metropolitan Water Board was granted authority to acquire existing water sources and infrastructure for its distribution to the cities and towns that comprised the metropolitan Boston area so that a single, efficient system could be established.

A Centralized Regional Agency

The initial step towards centralizing metropolitan administrative functions came in 1901 when the Metropolitan Sewerage Board and the Metropolitan Water Board merged to form the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board (MWSB). The MPC joined the MWSB in 1919 to form a single regional agency, the MDC, that oversaw metropolitan water supply, sewerage services, parks, parkways, and their policing within the jurisdictions of 37 cities and towns and 4 counties in Metropolitan Boston.[11] Four divisions comprised the new agency: Parks, Water, Sewer, and Parks Engineering. Of these, the Parks division, which included the Metropolitan Police, was the largest. In 1923 the Metropolitan Planning Division of the MDC was created, and within a few years, charted a new course for regional planning of the Metropolitan District which included designs for transportation routes, bridges, and other connectors that facilitated travel throughout the district.

In addition to maintaining the resources and upholding the services inherited through the merger of the MWSB and the MPC, the MDC continued to expand its responsibilities during the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s, acquiring more land, constructing more roadways, constructing recreational facilities, and initiating programmed recreational activities. Among the additions to the Metropolitan District during these years were the Chestnut Hill Reservation in Brighton, the Breakheart Reservation in Wakefield and Saugus, the Charles River Esplanade and Hatch Shell, and the Hammond Pond, Neponset Valley, VFW, and West Roxbury parkways. The MDC added skating rinks, golf courses, tennis courts and athletic fields to the reservations in the 1920s and 1930s, offered nature walks, hikes, and supervised play in the 1930s, and built swimming pools and more skating rinks in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, the MDC assumed responsibility for a number of park and road ways transferred to the agency by cities and towns unable to maintain them. The city of Cambridge, for example, transferred parkland along the northern edge of the Charles River to the MDC in 1920. The land included the Cambridge Parkway and Charles River Road, renamed Memorial Drive in 1924. In the 1950s, the City of Boston transferred all city-owned properties in the Dorchester Bay in South Boston, and parkways along the south shore including the Old Colony Parkway, Columbia Boulevard, and Gardner Way. In the mid 1950s, the City of Boston transferred nineteen additional parkways to the MDC.[12]

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[11] Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston National Register Nomination, Section E pg. 36.
[12] Ibid., E pg. 36-48.

The MDC Headquarters

As the responsibilities and initiatives of the MDC expanded in the years immediately following the merger of the MWSB and the MPC, the need for a central headquarters building for the newly centralized agency was apparent. Initially, the departments of the MDC existed in separate locations, despite their consolidation. In 1920, the principal office of the MDC was located in the Kimball Building at 18 Tremont Street, which had been home to the MPC, however, the main water and sewerage engineering offices as well as the clerical offices for water and sewer remained at numbers 1 and 2 Ashburton Place, the longtime location of the MWSB. The first annual report of the MDC described the inadequacy of having separate offices and proposed construction of a purpose-built headquarters building. It was a plea for consolidation, but also for a structure that would provide a secure location for the valuable plans of the MDC, and that would allow room for the agency to grow:

> ...the present division of offices between two buildings is unsatisfactory, and constant but unsuccessful efforts have been made to obtain one home for all departments. As there is no available space in the State House, and adequate quarters elsewhere cannot be obtained, it seems wise to construct a suitable building in which the administrative, engineering, and clerical offices may be concentrated and the valuable plans and other property in charge of the Commission reasonably safeguarded. It seems probable that the activities of this Commission may be increased considerably in the years to come, and a well-located and properly constructed building is the natural and necessary center of the varied and important interests of the metropolitan district.[13]

Within a year, the offices had been consolidated into the buildings at 1 and 2 Ashburton Place, which was regarded as an improvement, but the need for a new building was reiterated in the next annual report which noted, "...the location is good but the building is far from an ideal one for the purposes required."[14]

The following year, in 1922, the Director of Parks wrote a lengthy description of the inadequacies of the buildings at Ashburton Place for office space, attributing the difficulties primarily to the fact that the buildings were constructed for use as dwelling houses and were not suitable for the office needs of the MDC. Chief among his concerns was the need for fireproof vaults to safeguard the plans that had been generated by the agency. He urged, "Above all, the building is not of fireproof construction and houses documents and plans, the loss of which would be irreparable. I cannot too strongly urge the provision of new fireproof headquarters at the earliest opportunity."[15] Seven years later, construction of a

[13] Annual Report of the Metropolitan District Commission, 1920, pg.3.
[14] Annual Report of the Metropolitan District Commission, 1921, pg. 2.
[15] Annual Report of the Metropolitan District Commission, 1922, pg. 10.

"General Office and Headquarters Building for the Metropolitan District Commission" was authorized under Chapter 362 of the Acts of 1929. The MDC moved into five and a half floors of the new building in December of 1930, and made the remaining floor space available to other state departments.[16] The building remained the Headquarters of the MDC for just under seventy-five years.

3.2 Architectural Significance

The MDC Headquarters building achieves additional significance for its association with the prominent architectural firm of Densmore, LeClear, & Robbins, a Boston-based firm whose work is represented throughout the Commonwealth. Initially a partnership between Densmore & LeClear, later joined by Robbins, the firm was in practice from the early nineteenth century through 1942. Prior to the MDC commission, the firm designed notable Boston buildings in the Park Square area such as the Paine Furniture Building at 75 Arlington Street of 1913, the Salada Tea Building at 330 Stuart Street of 1916 and 1926, the Park Square Building at 1-59 St. James Avenue of 1922-23. Edward Dana Densmore died in 1925, though the firm retained his name. Concurrently with the commission for the MDC Headquarters building, the firm was designing the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company at 6 Bowdoin Square in 1930. The MDC headquarters building was not the first commission for the MDC awarded to Densmore, LeClear & Robbins. In 1929, the firm designed a headhouse for the Quabbin Aqueduct Shaft in Barre, Massachusetts for the MDC. Following construction of the headquarters building, Densemore, LeClear, & Robbins continued their work for the MDC designing multiple buildings and infrastructure supporting the Quabbin and Norumbega reservoirs and the Hultman Aqueduct in Barre, Belchertown, Rutland, Southborough, Ware, Wayland, Weston, and West Boylston, Massachusetts through the 1930s.[17] Other examples of their non-MDC related work can be found in Cambridge, Newton, Quincy, Somerville, Watertown, Williamstown, and Worcester. These include multiple buildings for New England Telephone Company, schools, and warehouses.[18]

While the MDC Headquarters building was not as commanding, perhaps, as some of the firm's earlier work, or even its designs contemporary with the MDC headquarters building, two main factors contributed to the building's atypical form and expression within the firm's oeuvre. Most significantly, the MDC headquarters building was a state-funded building erected during the lean years of the Depression when limited resources influenced architectural expression. Additionally, the classically-inspired detailing of the building's exterior, in contrast with the Art Deco New England Telephone Building down the hill at Bowdoin Square, for example, constructed concurrently with the MDC Headquarters building, reflected the context of the MDC building's immediate surroundings. Four tall, red brick, classically detailed buildings constructed

[16] Annual Report of the Metropolitan District Commission, 1930, pg. 4.
[17] Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database. http://mhc-macris.net.
[18] Ibid.

between 1905 and 1927 were located on Ashburton Place and Bowdoin Street.[19] The Art Deco detailing more typical of the Depression era was reflected in the entry vestibule and the first floor lobby space of the MDC building.

Finally, the MDC headquarters building achieves local significance as the only building to survive the urban renewal clearance of the buildings and street pattern bound by Cambridge, Somerset, Ashburton and Bowdoin streets that occurred in the 1960s in preparation for construction of the Leverett Saltanstall State Office Building in 1966 and the John W. McCormack State Office Building in 1975. The wholesale land clearance of this area and the area north of Cambridge Street for government buildings was regarded by renowned architectural historian, Abbott Lowell Cummings, as having created, "a devastation here unmatched since that of the fire of 1872 in the downtown area."[20] The clearance area south of Cambridge Street within the boundaries described above fell under the jurisdiction of the state-appointed Government Center Commission established in 1960 for the purpose of constructing a state office building, a health, welfare, and education center and other state buildings. As the MDC headquarters fell within the boundaries of the takings, the building was slated for demolition. However, the original space studies for the new state office buildings did not include accommodation for the MDC offices. Thus the state legislature passed an amendment to the Act that authorized the takings which allowed for the retention of the MDC Headquarters building.[21]

As noted in section 2.2 Physical Description, the MDC headquarters building represents the second of three phases of development of the area bound by Cambridge, Somerset, Ashburton, and Bowdoin streets. The first phase resulted primarily in residential development from the late eighteenth through the mid nineteenth centuries. This period of development also included churches and a school house. Beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing through the 1930s, a second phase of development introduced public institutions to the area. Boston University constructed Sleeper Hall at 12 Somerset Street in 1882 and converted the Mt. Vernon Church formerly at 11 Ashburton Place to use as a law school in 1897; the Suffolk County Courthouse replaced residences at Pemberton Square in 1886; the Commonwealth Hotel was constructed in 1905 at the corner of Bowdoin Street and what was formerly Allston Street; the Baptist Social Union was constructed at the corner of Bowdoin Street and Ashburton Place in 1905; the Boston City Club was constructed at the corner of Ashburton Place and Somerset Street in 1913; and the Beacon Hill House was constructed in 1927 at the corner of Bowdoin Street and Ashburton Place. The construction of the MDC building in 1930, which replaced a school house that dated to the first

[19] The Boston City Club, the Beacon Hill House, the Commonwealth Hotel, and the Ford Building Baptist Social Union.
[20] Abbott Lowell Cummings, "Charles Bulfinch and Boston's Vanishing West End," *Old-Time New England,* vol. LII, No.2, October-December 1961, pg. 31.
[21] Report to the Senate and House of Representatives by John A. Volpe, Governor of the Commonwealth. House No. 3832, June 1962.

quarter of the nineteenth century, as well as a row house, and of the addition to the courthouse in 1936 represented the last major construction campaigns within this period of development. The final phase of development occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when the area was leveled for the Leverett Saltinstall State Office building in 1966, followed by the John W. McCormack State Office Building in 1975. Only the Boston City Club now occupied by Suffolk University at 12-14 Somerset Street, the Beacon Hill House at 122-126 Bowdoin Street, and the Suffolk County Courthouse remain on the periphery of the leveled area as remnants of the second phase of development of the area. All that remains of the first phase of development is the ghost profile of a residential structure on the western elevation of the former Boston City Club.

3.3 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation

The Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters building meets the criteria for Landmark designation found in section four of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended, under the following criteria:

B. as a structure at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with an important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, and social history of the city and the commonwealth. As the purpose-built headquarters of a prominent state agency that transformed the development of common resources within the region of Metropolitan Boston, the MDC Headquarters building is integrally associated with events that have made an outstanding contribution to and are identified prominently with the cultural, economic, and social history of the city and the Commonwealth.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

According to the City of Boston Assessor's records, the Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters located at 20 Somerset Street has a total assessed value of $6,781,400.00 with the land valued at $1,264,400.00 and the building valued at $5,517,000.00.

4.2 Current Ownership

According to the City of Boston Assessor's records, the Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters located at 20 Somerset Street is currently owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The building is currently in the disposition process facilitated by the Division of Capital Assets Management (DCAM), which awarded development of the site to Weston Associates in June 2005.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

In April of 2004, following the legislative merger of the MDC and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to form the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the MDC Headquarters building was vacated. Shortly thereafter, DCR transferred the MDC Headquarters to the Division of Capital Assets Management (DCAM) to surplus the building. In May of 2004, the Massachusetts Historical Commission informed DCAM that the MDC Headquarters building had been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the State level of significance. DCAM submitted a Building Conditions Assessment Report to the Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means in November of 2004 and concluded that the property would be disposed of by sale for private redevelopment. In January of 2005 the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) voted to upgrade the building's rating from a V to a III F.S. DCAM released an RFP for redevelopment of the MDC Headquarters building in February 2005, and awarded the development to Weston Associates in June 2005. In January of 2006, the BLC received a petition for Landmark status of the MDC Headquarters building, and held a preliminary hearing at which the petition was accepted for further study.

5.2 Current Planning Issues

Suffolk University, in partnership with Weston Associates, presented current plans for the redevelopment of the MDC Headquarters building to the BLC at an advisory hearing in May 2006. The current plans call for the demolition of the MDC Headquarters building and construction of a thirty-one story student center and residence hall in its place. The presentation to the BLC included three alternatives to demolition studied by DCAM and Suffolk University: reuse of the existing building as an office building, reuse of the existing building as a dormitory building, and retention of the north and east facades of the existing building with new construction of thirty-eight stories behind the retained facades for use as a student center and residence hall. According to the presentation, reuse of the existing building as an office building was evaluated by DCAM and rejected because the cost of rehabilitation would be substantially more than the replacement value of the building. The second alternative to demolition, reuse of the existing building as a dormitory, was rejected because the change in use would require substantial alterations to the building and yield a fraction of the desired beds for the dormitory. The third alternative to demolition, retention of the eastern and northern facades and construction of a thirty-eight story tower, was rejected because of the amount of work required to retain the façade and the additional height of the new construction that would be required.

The preferred development scheme is for new construction of thirty-one stories on the site of the MDC Headquarters building. Six stories would be devoted to a student center. According to the project proponent, this will yield 792 student beds which will allow Suffolk University to house a significantly higher percentage of their student body than they can currently accommodate. The development plan also includes site/landscape improvements to the adjacent Roemer Plaza, south of the proposed building site.

5.3 Current Zoning

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Headquarters building is located within the Pemberton Square Protection Area in the Government Center/Markets District. As-of-Right maximum building height is 125' with a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 8. According to Article 45 Section 45-5 of the Boston Zoning Code, the Protection Areas within the Government Center/Markets District were established in order to protect the existing scale, the quality of the pedestrian environment, and concentrations of historic buildings within and abutting the Protection Areas.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission:

A. Individual Landmark Designation

When the Central Business District was originally surveyed in 1980, the Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters building was rated a V, as it was at that time just fifty years old. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has determined the Metropolitan District Commission Headquarters building eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the State level of significance. At its meeting on January 25, 2005, in response to a written request made by the Boston Preservation Alliance, the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) voted to upgrade the rating of 20 Somerset Street, Boston, to a III F.S. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcel 0302782000, ward 3, and shall address the following exterior elements, hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Exterior Features:"

- The exterior envelope of the MDC Headquarters building.

B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Exterior Features as a Landmark.

C. Preservation Restriction

The Commission could recommend the owner consider a preservation restriction for any or all of the Specified Exterior Features.

D. Preservation Plan

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

E. National Register Listing

The Commission could recommend the owner pursue National Register listing, which would afford the building limited protection from federal, federally-licensed or federally-assisted activities, and make the property eligible for federal tax credits for substantial rehabilitation if the property is developed for income-producing purposes.

6.2 Impact of Alternatives:

A. Individual Landmark Designation

Landmark Designation represents the city's highest honor and is therefore restricted to cultural resources of outstanding architectural and/or historical significance. Landmark designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the Specified Exterior Features of the property, in accordance with the standards and criteria adopted as part of the designation. Landmark designation results in listing on the State Register of Historic Places.

B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation

Without Landmark designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Exterior Features, or extend guidance to the owners under chapter 772.

C. Preservation Restriction

Chapter 666 of the M.G.L. Acts of 1969 allows individuals to protect the architectural integrity of their property via a preservation restriction. A restriction may be donated to or purchased by any governmental body or non-profit organization capable of acquiring interests in land and strongly associated with historic preservation. These agreements are recorded instruments (normally deeds) that run with the land for a specific term or in perpetuity, thereby binding not only the owner who conveyed the restriction, but also subsequent owners. Restrictions typically govern alterations to exterior features and maintenance of the appearance and condition of the property.

D. Preservation Plan

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. It does not carry regulatory oversight.

E. National Register

National Register listing provides an honorary designation and limited protection from federal, federally-licensed or federally-assisted activities. It creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. Tax credits are not available to owners who demolish portions of historic properties.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of the MDC headquarters building lies primarily with its main tenant, the Metropolitan District Commission, for whom it was purpose-built in 1930. The MDC, established in 1919, represented the merger of what were originally three of the country's pioneering regional agencies: the Metropolitan Sewerage Board, the Metropolitan Water Board, and the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC). Individually these agencies were among the first in the nation to implement regional management of shared resources, and served as national and international models for regional planning. The merger in 1919 created a single regional agency charged with the oversight of watersheds, water supply and treatment facilities, sewerage and sewerage treatment plants, as well as parklands and parkways for all of the cities and towns within a ten mile radius of downtown Boston. The work initiated by the individual agencies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and advanced by the MDC after 1919 transformed in the development of Metropolitan Boston. The MDC Headquarters building was the first purpose-built, centralized home of the MDC, designed not only to serve as an office building for this significant agency, but also to safeguard the plans that created the Metropolitan District as we know it today. Additional significance is achieved for the building's association with its designers, the architectural firm of Densmore, LeClear, and Robbins, a prominent Boston-based architectural firm whose work is represented throughout the Commonwealth. Therefore the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the MDC Headquarters building as described in section 6.1A, be designated as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The boundaries shall correspond to Ward 3, Parcel 0302782000 located at 20 Somerset Street, Boston.

8.0 GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

8.1 Introduction

Per sections, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended) Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Landmark Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the property. The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitation to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily insure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

As intended by the statute a wide variety of buildings and features are included within the area open to Landmark Designation, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. Some properties of truly exceptional architectural and/or historical value will permit only the most minor modifications, while for some others the Commission encourages changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with the properties' existing features and changed uses.

In general, the intent of the Standards and Criteria is to preserve existing qualities that cause designation of a property; however, in some cases they have been structured as to encourage the removal of additions that have lessened the integrity of the property.

It is recognized that changes will be required in designated properties for a wide variety of reasons, not all of which are under the complete control of the Commission or the owners. Primary examples are: Building code conformance and safety requirements; Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems; Changes due to proposed new uses of a property.

The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for a particular property. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the property. In some cases, priorities have been assigned within the Standards and Criteria as an aid to property owners in identifying the most critical design features. The treatments outlined below are listed in hierarchical order from least amount of intervention to the greatest amount of intervention. The owner, manager or developer should follow them in order to ensure a successful project that is sensitive to the historic landmark.

- **Identify, Retain, and Preserve** the form and detailing of the materials and features that define the historic character of the structure or site. These are basic treatments that should prevent actions that may cause the diminution or loss of the structure's or site's historic character. It is important to remember that loss of character can be caused by the cumulative effect of insensitive actions whether large or small.
- **Protect and Maintain** the materials and features that have been identified as important and must be retained during the rehabilitation work. Protection usually involves the least amount of intervention and is done before other work.
- **Repair** the character defining features and materials when it is necessary. Repairing begins with the least amount of intervention as possible. Patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing according to recognized preservation methods are the techniques that should be followed. Repairing may also include limited replacement in kind of extremely deteriorated or missing parts of features. Replacements should be based on surviving prototypes.
- **Replacement** of entire character defining features or materials follows repair when the deterioration prevents repair. The essential form and detailing should still be evident so that the physical evidence can be used to re-establish the feature. The preferred option is replacement of the entire feature in kind using the same material. Because this approach may not always be technically or economically feasible the commission will consider the use of compatible substitute material. The commission does not recommend removal and replacement with new material a feature that could be repaired.
- **Missing Historic Features** should be replaced with new features that are based on adequate historical, pictorial and physical documentation. The commission may consider a replacement feature that is compatible with the remaining character defining features. The new design should match the scale, size, and material of the historic feature.
- **Alterations or Additions** that may be needed to assure the continued use of the historic structure or site should not radically change, obscure or destroy character defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. The commission encourages new uses that are compatible with the historic structure or site and that do not require major alterations or additions.

In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.

Finally, the Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels:

- **Section 8.3** - Those general ones that are common to all landmark designations (building exteriors, building interiors, landscape features and archaeological sites).
- **Section 9.0** - Those specific ones that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standards and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

8.2 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the landmark. In order to provide some guidance for the landmark owner, manager or developer and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized into:

A. Routine activities which are not subject to review by the Commission:

1. Activities associated with routine maintenance, including such items as: Housekeeping, pruning, fertilizing, mulching, etc.
2. Routine activities associated with seasonal installations which do not result in any permanent alterations or attached fixtures.

B. Activities which may be determined by the Executive Director to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption:

1. Ordinary maintenance and repair involving no change in design, material, color and outward appearance, including such items as: Major cleaning programs (including chemical surface cleaning), repainting, planting or removal of limited number of trees or shrubs, major vegetation management.
2. In-kind replacement or repair.

C. Activities requiring Landmarks Commission review:

Any reconstruction, restoration, replacement, alteration or demolition (This includes but is not limited to surface treatments, fixtures and ornaments) such as: New construction of any type; removal of existing features or element; any alteration involving change in design, material color, location or outward appearance; major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, changes in landforms.

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the Executive Director shall determine whether an application is required and if so, whether it shall be an application for a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption.

E. Concurrent Jurisdiction

In some cases, issues which fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Commission may also fall under the jurisdiction of other city, state and federal boards and commissions such as the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the

Massachusetts Historical Commission and others. All efforts will be made to expedite the review process. Whenever possible and appropriate, joint meetings will be arranged.

8.3 General Standards and Criteria

1. The design approach to the property should begin with the premise that the features of historical and architectural significance described within the Study Report must be preserved. In general, this will minimize alterations that will be allowed.

2. Changes and additions to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. (The term **'later contributing features"** shall be used to convey this concept.)

3. Deteriorated materials and/or features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.

4. When replacement of features that define the historic character of the property is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later contributing features.

5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.

6. New additions or alterations should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.

7. New additions or related new construction should be differentiated from the existing thus, they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.

8. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.

9. Priority shall be given to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or which it can be reasonability inferred may be in the future.

10. Surface cleaning shall use **the mildest method possible. Sandblasting, wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted.**

11. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for the property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the

proponents prepare an historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.

12. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved.

The General Standards and Criteria has been financed in part with funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of State Michael Joseph Connolly, Chairman.

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9.0 EXTERIORS - SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

MDC Headquarters Building, 20 Somerset Street, Boston

9.1 Introduction

1. In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.

2. The intent of these standards and criteria is to preserve the overall character and appearance of the MDC Headquarters building including its exterior form, its mass, and its richness of detail.

3. The standards and criteria acknowledge that there will be changes to the exterior of the building and are intended to make the changes sensitive to the architectural character of the building.

4. Each property will be separately studied to determine if a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed.

5. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed:

    a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
    b. Historic association with the property.
    c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
    d. Functional usefulness.

6. The exterior envelope of the MDC Headquarters building is subject to the terms of the exterior guidelines herein stated.

7. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following: exterior walls, windows, entrances/doors, ironwork, roof, roof projections, signs, marquees, and awnings, exterior lighting, additions, demolition/new construction, landscape/building site, accessibility, and archaeology.

8. In these guidelines, the term **Primary Elevation** refers to the north and east elevations of the MDC Headquarters building, fronting the Garden of Peace and Somerset Street, respectively. The term **Secondary Elevation** refers to the south and west elevations of the MDC Headquarters building.

9. It is recognized that the loss of the historic buildings adjacent to the Secondary Elevations of the MDC Headquarters Building resulted in exposure of elevations that were originally obscured. These Secondary Elevations exhibit less architectural embellishment relative to the Primary Elevations. These guidelines reflect that condition by requiring a higher standard of preservation for the Primary Elevations than for the Secondary Elevations.

9.2 Exterior Walls

A. General

1. No new openings shall be allowed on Primary Elevations. New openings may be allowed on Secondary Elevations.

2. No original existing openings on Primary Elevations shall be filled or changed in size.

3. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on Primary Elevations.

4. Original or later contributing projections such as oriels and bays shall not be removed.

5. The Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that work proposed to the materials outlined in sections B and C be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.

B. Masonry (Brick, Stone, Terra Cotta, Concrete, Stucco and Mortar)

1. All masonry materials on Primary Elevations shall be preserved. All masonry materials on Secondary Elevations should be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, or consolidating the masonry using recognized preservation methods. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, or consolidating the masonry using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation on Secondary

Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.

4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Original mortar on Primary Elevations shall be retained. Original mortar on Secondary Elevations should be retained.

7. Deteriorated mortar on Primary Elevations shall be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints. Deteriorated mortar on Secondary Elevations should be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints.

8. Use of mechanical saws and hammers shall not be allowed.

9. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile and method of application.

10. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.

11. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should be performed only when necessary to halt deterioration.

12. If the building is to be cleaned, **the mildest method possible** shall be used.

13. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).

14. **Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted.** Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration.

15. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem.

Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.

16. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.

C. Architectural Metals (Cast Iron, Steel, Pressed Tin, Copper, Aluminum and Zinc)

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals on Primary Elevations shall be preserved. All original or later contributing architectural metals on Secondary Elevations should be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.

4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use **the mildest method possible**.

7. Abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.

8. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission. Test patches should

always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).

9. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.

10. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

9.3 Windows

Refer to Sections 9.2 B and C regarding treatment of materials and features.

1. All windows on Primary Elevations shall be preserved. All windows on Secondary Elevations should be preserved.

2. The original window design and arrangement of window openings on Primary Elevations shall be retained. The original window design and arrangement of window openings on Secondary Elevations should be retained.

3. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.

4. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.

5. Original or later contributing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods. Original or later contributing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

6. Deteriorated or missing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material,

color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.

7. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

8. Vinyl, or vinyl clad replacement sash shall not be allowed.

9. Simulated muntins, including snap-in, surface-applied, or between-glass grids shall not be allowed.

10. Tinted or reflective-coated glass shall not be allowed. Low E glass treated with the lowest level of coating necessary to achieve energy code compliance will be allowed.

11. Only clear single-paned glass shall be allowed in multi-light windows since insulating glass in multi-light windows will exaggerate the width of the muntins.

12. Exterior combination storm windows may be allowed provided the installation has a minimal visual impact. However, use of interior storm windows is encouraged.

13. Exterior combination storm windows shall have a narrow perimeter framing that does not obscure the glazing of the primary window. In addition, the meeting rail of the combination storm window shall align with that of the primary window.

14. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.

15. Clear or mill finished aluminum frames shall not be allowed.

16. Exterior storm windows shall not be allowed for arched windows, leaded glass, faceted frames, or bent(curved) glass.

17. Window frames and sashes should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

9.4 Entrances/Doors

Refer to Sections 9.2 B and C regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.5, 9.9 and 9.13 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. All entrances and doors on Primary Elevations shall be retained. All entrances and doors on Secondary Elevations should be preserved.

2. The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings on Primary Elevations shall be retained. The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings on Secondary Elevations should be retained.

3. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.

4. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) on Secondary Elevations should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods

5. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative) and details on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative) and details on Secondary Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation

6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

8. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details on Primary Elevations shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and

decorative) and details on Secondary Elevations should not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

9. Only doors of appropriate design, material and assembly shall be allowed.

10. In general, storm doors (aluminum or wood-framed) shall not be allowed on the Somerset Street entrance unless evidence shows that they had been used. They may be allowed on secondary entrances. Where allowed storm doors shall be painted to match the color of the primary door.

11. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.

12. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

13. Entry lighting shall be located in traditional locations.

14. Light fixtures illuminating entrances/doors shall not be affixed to the Primary Elevations of the building. Light fixtures illuminating entrances and doors should not be affixed to the Secondary Elevations of the building.

15. Light fixtures illuminating entrances/doors shall be of a design and scale that is appropriate to the style and period of the building and should not imitate styles earlier than the building. Contemporary light fixtures will be considered, however.

16. Entrance elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

9.5 Ironwork
(includes Fire Escapes, Balconies and Window Grilles.)

Refer to Section 9.2 C regarding treatment of materials and features.

1. All original or later contributing ironwork on Primary Elevations shall be preserved. All original or later contributing ironwork on Secondary Elevations should be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be

retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

7. New balconies shall not be permitted on Primary Elevations.

8. New balconies may be considered on Secondary Elevations if they are required for safety and an alternative egress route is clearly not possible.

9. Fixed diagonal fire stairways shall not be allowed.

10. The installation of security grilles may be allowed.

11. Window grilles shall be mounted within the window reveal and secured into the mortar joints rather into the masonry or onto the face of the building.

12. Window grilles shall have pierced horizontal rails or butt-welded joints.

13. Overlapping welded joints shall not be allowed.

14. Window grilles shall not project beyond the face of the building.

15. Ironwork elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

9.6 Roof

Refer to Section 9.2 B and C regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.7 and 9.10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. The overall flat roof shape should be preserved. (Cornices are considered to be part of the building walls rather than a roof or roof projection, and accordingly, are subject to Section 9.2).

2. Original or later contributing features (decorative and functional), details and ornamentation should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing roofing features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Original or later contributing roofing features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation should not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

7. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material.

8. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless it is based on physical or documentary evidence.

9.7 Roof Projections
(includes Penthouses, Roof Decks, Mechanical or Electrical Equipment, Satellite Dishes, Antennas and other Communication Devices)

Refer to Sections 9.6 and 9.10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. The basic criteria which shall govern whether a roof projection can be added to a roof include:

    a. The preservation of the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape.
    b. Height of the existing building.
    c. Prominence of the existing roof form.
    d. Visibility of the proposed roof projection.

2. Minimizing or eliminating the visual impact of the roof projection is the general objective and the following guidelines shall be followed:

    a. Location shall be selected where the roof projection is not visible from the street; setbacks shall be utilized.
    b. Overall height or other dimensions shall be kept to a point where the roof projection is not seen from the street.
    c. Exterior treatment shall be related to the materials, color and texture of the building or to other materials integral to the period and character of the building, typically used for appendages.
    d. Openings in a penthouse shall relate to the building in proportion, type and size of opening, wherever visually apparent.

9.8 Signs, Marquees and Awnings

Refer to Sections 9.3, 9.4, and 9.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. Signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in structure being reused for purpose different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.

2. Signs or architectural detailing integral to the building ornamentation, specifically the panel above the Somerset Street entrance that reads "Metropolitan District Commission," shall be retained and repaired where necessary.

3 Approval of a given sign or awning shall be limited to the owner of the business or building and shall not be transferable; signs shall be removed or resubmitted for approval when the operation or purpose of the advertised business changes.

4. New signs, marquees and awnings shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.

5. New signs, marquees and awnings shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.

6. The design and material of new signs marquees and awnings should reinforce the architectural character of the building.

7. Signs, marquees and awnings applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building.

8. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.

9. Lettering forms or typeface will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally shall be either contemporary or relate to the period of the building or its later contributing features.

10. Lighting of signs shall be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.

11. No back-lit or plastic signs shall be allowed on the exterior of the building.

12. The placement and configuration of awnings should relate to the facade openings so as not to obscure architectural details.

13. Continuous awnings across multiple windows or wrapping the surfaces of a bay shall not be allowed.

14. Individual awnings shall be mounted within the masonry window opening.

15. Shed-roofed awnings are preferable to those with quarter-round or bull-nosed profiles.

16. Valances shall be flexible, i.e., their bottom edges shall hang free rather than be attached to a horizontal framing member. Rigid valances tend to impart an excessively permanent architectural quality to a fabric-clad building element.

9.9 Exterior Lighting

Refer to Section 9.2 C regarding treatment of materials and features. Refer to Sections 9.4, 9.8 and 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. There are three aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building:

    a. Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
    b. Quality of illumination on building exterior
    c. Interior lighting as seen from the exterior.

2. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures on Primary Elevations shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures on Secondary Elevations should be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Primary Elevations shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation on Secondary Elevations should not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

7. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.

8. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:

    a. Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
    b. Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
    c. New lighting fixtures which are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
    d. The new exterior lighting location shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.

9. Interior lighting shall only be reviewed when its character has a significant effect on the exterior of the building; that is, when the view of the illuminated fixtures themselves, or the quality and color of the light they produce, is clearly visible through the exterior fenestration.

10. No exposed conduit shall be allowed.

11. Architectural night lighting of the historic building is recommended.

9.10 Additions

Refer to Sections 9.5, 9.6, 9.7 and 9.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. An exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space requirements. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the building.

2. New additions shall be designed so that the character defining features of the Primary Elevations of the building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed.

3. New additions should be designed so that they are differentiated from the existing building, thus they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.

4. New additions shall be of a size, scale and of materials that are in harmony with the historic building.

5. Additional stories shall acknowledge the cornice height of the original building by being set back from the wall plane and should be as inconspicuous and minimally visible from a public way as possible.

9.11 Demolition/New Construction

Refer to Sections 9.1, 9.6, 9.10, 9.12, 9.13 and 9.14 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. As noted in Section 9.1.9, it is recognized that the loss of the historic buildings adjacent to the Secondary Elevations of the MDC Headquarters building resulted in exposure of elevations that were originally obscured, and the Secondary Elevations exhibit less architectural embellishment relative to the Primary Elevations. Removal of the Secondary Elevations to accommodate new construction may be allowable, if the Commission finds that the standards of sections (2)-(7) Of this Section 9.11 have been met.

2. No demolition of Primary Elevations shall be allowed.

3. Demolition shall not disturb or cause damage to the Primary Elevations of the MDC Headquarters building.

4. Demolition shall not be permitted before plans, permits, and financing for the new construction are in place and approved by the Commission.

5. New construction shall be designed to be compatible with and to respect the scale and massing of the MDC Headquarters building.

6. New construction shall acknowledge the cornice height of the Primary Elevations of the MDC Headquarters building, so that any new construction above the cornice line shall be set back from the wall plane of the historic building and shall have appropriate height transitions.

7. New construction should not imitate an earlier style, period or method of construction.

9.12 Landscape/Building Site

Refer to Sections 9.2 B and regarding treatment of materials and features. Refer to Sections 9.10, 9.9, 9.13 and 9.14 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. The general intent is to enhance the setting of the MDC Headquarters building.

2. It is recognized that the environment surrounding the property has character scale and street pattern quite different from what existed when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the landmark and its newer surroundings.

3. Original or later contributing character defining site features (decorative and functional), materials, elements, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.

4. Deteriorated or missing character defining site features (decorative and functional), materials, elements, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.

5. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

7. New additions/alterations to the site (such as: parking lots, loading docks, ramps, etc.) shall be as unobtrusive as possible and preserve any original or later contributing site features.

8. Removal of non-historic site features from the existing site is encouraged.

9. The exiting landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the landmark or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the landmark.

10. Original layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas should be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the landmark.

9.13 Accessibility

Refer to Sections 9.2 A, B, and C regarding treatment of materials. Refer to Sections 9.3, 9.4, 9.9, 9.10 and 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:

   a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
   b. Assess the property's existing and required level of accessibility;
   c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.

2. Because of the complex nature of accessibility the commission will review proposals on a case by case bases. The commission recommends consulting with the following document which is available from the commission office:

   U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; **Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible"** by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

9.14 Archaeology

Refer to Sections 9.2 B and C regarding treatment of materials. Refer to Section 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. Disturbance of the terrain around the building or site shall be kept to a minimum so as not to disturb any unknown archaeological materials

2. The building site should be surveyed for potential archaeological sites prior to the beginning of any construction project.

3. Known archaeological site shall be protected during any construction project.

4. All planning, any necessary site investigation, or data recovery shall be conducted by a professional archaeologist.

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